

OSCE media freedom representative condemns violent attack on journalists in Albania

VIENNA, 17 June 2014 - OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović today condemned an attack on journalists reporting on a police raid in Gjirokastra's Lazarat village in southern Albania yesterday.

“Violence against journalists is unacceptable, safety is a basic pre-condition for their work,” Mijatović said.

According to media reports, a vehicle carrying a journalist, a camera operator, a broadcasting technician and a driver from A1 Report TV channel was shot at by masked armed individuals and later set on fire. The car, with a visible logo of A1 Report, along with the media equipment inside it, was completely destroyed. The journalist Gerti Xhaja was also briefly held hostage and released with the assistance of local citizens.

“It is positive that public officials have already condemned this incident, and that a police investigation is underway. There must be no impunity for attacks on journalists, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice as soon as possible,” Mijatović said. “Over the last years, safety of journalist in Albania has improved and it is important to do everything possible to make sure that this case does not set a bad precedent.”

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media observes media developments in all 57 OSCE participating States. She provides early warning on violations of freedom of expression and media freedom and promotes full compliance with OSCE media freedom commitments. Learn more at www.osce.org/fom, Twitter: [@OSCE_RFoM](https://twitter.com/OSCE_RFoM) and on facebook.com/osce.rfom.